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AN

TWO LETTERS

ADDRESSED TO

THE EDITOR OF THE CHURCH,
(John Kent, esq.)

EXPOSING THE

INTOLERANT BIGOTRY

OF THAT JOURNAL,

AND ANIMADVERTING ESPECIALLY ON THE SPIRIT AND ASSUMPTIONS OF

AN EDITORIAL ARTICLE

WHICH APPEARED IN ITS COLUMNS ON THE 7TH APRIL, 1843.

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BY MATTHEW RICHEY, A. M.,

WESLEYAN MINISTER.  
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NEW STREET.

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1843.

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## PRELIMINARY NOTICE.

As the causes which occasioned the publication of the following Letters in the *Toronto Herald*, may probably continue to operate, it has been deemed expedient to present them to the public in the present form. The last *Church* is spiced with another gratuitous attack on the Wesleyans; but, *O pudor! O pietas!* it is fraught with inuendoes so mean, and marked by such assassin-like cowardice, as we really did not think even *he* was capable of. One topic of consolation remains: much *lower* he *cannot* descend. Soon, therefore, he must either rest—if indeed his turbulent spirit is susceptible of quiescence—or begin to move in an upward direction.

If the Wesleyans, as a body, have erred at all in reference to an unfeigned desire to cultivate friendly relations with the Church of England, it has been in permitting the impulses of that desire, in some instances, to carry them, perhaps, too far. In the day of her trial, little more than ten years since, when, arraigned before the tribunal of public opinion, she stood trembling on the jutting precipice of destruction, and was forsaken of *all others*; METHODISM, faithful to her professions of attachment, came to her rescue. The public press, in the interests of the Church, was not at that time, slow to acknowledge the obligation: it caused the empire to ring from end to end with eulogies of the disinterested friendship of 'the Wesleyans' to the Church of their venerated Founder. And we have yet to learn, that there is any thing dishonourable in wishing to have credit for the same feeling and the same principle still. But, if that reputation in the eyes of *high* churchmen is to be purchased only by our "*selling the truth*;" then, be it known to all men by these presents, we cannot entertain the condition of its enjoyment: No, not for a moment. God being our helper, we are determined, at all hazards, "to keep the mystery of the faith in a *pure* conscience."

*Amicus Plato, amicus Socrates, sed magis amica veritas.*

That no ground may be afforded to the charge of unfairness, we give below the Editorial article entire, by which the subsequent Letters were called forth.

(From the Church, April 7.)

Although it must certainly and cheerfully be confessed that Churchmen begin to exhibit a clearer understanding of their duties as such, still it is lamentable to behold those, whose station and opportunities of reading warrant us in looking for better things at their hands, compromising the plainest principles of Christian unity, and consorting, in religious fellowship, with men whom scripture bids us to mark and avoid, as causing divisions, and rending the seamless garment of the Redeemer. Instances have of late occurred, in which

gentlemen who call themselves Churchmen and who are supposed to pray every Sunday for deliverance "from all false doctrine, heresy and schism," have presided at the Anniversary meetings of schismatical bodies, or enacted the part of Master of the Revels, at one of those absurd and childish serio-comic money-raising festivities, commonly known by some such name as METHODIST MISSIONARY TEA-PARTIES.

It is just possible that these gentlemen may have suffered their good-nature to overcome their scruples, and that their inclination to oblige a certain number of

fellow citizens may have induced them to accede to requests which they wish had never been made, but which they want the resolution to refuse. They may, moreover, endeavour to persuade themselves, that by presiding over a dissenting meeting once a-year they are by no means failing in that general homage which is due from them to the Church, but that, on the contrary, they exhibit a spirit of diffusive charity in unison with her spirit and teaching.

Such amiable weaknesses as these may be palliatives in some cases for the lax and mischievous Churchmanship, or rather no Churchmanship at all, of which we complain. But at best they are but very flimsy excuses, unworthy of men of any principle or reflection: and therefore we feel it our duty again and again to enforce those arguments, which we think ought to weigh with every Churchman, in regulating his religious intercourse with his christian brethren belonging to Dissenting denominations.

It is bad and inconsistent enough in a Churchman to attend Dissenting places of worship, either for curiosity or devotion. The evils of this practice have been dwelt upon by our best and holiest divines, and by none more strongly than by Bishop Beveridge. But at present we do not mean to revert to this point. We just glance at it, in order to say, that if a casual attendance at a sectarian place of worship be a breach of duty, how much greater a transgression is committed when a Churchman, on the grand and solemn occasion of some Dissenting Anniversary, allows himself to be thrust into the temporary headship of a sect, gives *all* the weight of his character, and *some* of the contents of his purse, to the object of the meeting, and the principles of those most interested in it, although the very existence of the sect, over which he enacts the part of president for the evening, is most expressly condemned by that branch of Christ's Holy Catholic Church, of which he professes himself a member! Can inconsistency be more glaring than this? Mr. Lukewarm goes to Church on Sunday, and on Monday evening presides at a Methodist Missionary Meeting, recognizing, co-operating, and interchanging compliments with, unauthorised ministers, whom the Church regards as less than laymen, being self-excluded from her pale. Has he done all that he could for the Church? Has she no wants to be supplied, no Clergy to be supported? And is he therefore at liberty, having superabundance of means,

and seeing no regular channel for their employment, to devote them to some purpose, not altogether regular and unexceptionable, but still, as he thinks, calculated to extend the Gospel, and to promote the spiritual welfare of his brethren?

Alas! what a mockery! what a vain pretence is this! When the Churchman in this Province gives his five pounds, or his five dollars to Dissent, he knows, in almost every case, that his own lawful minister struggles on with a scanty income, with difficulty contriving to feed, clothe, and educate his family in the plainest manner. He knows that his brethren in the new and poor settlements cry out aloud for ministers, while they can give nothing or but little to their support. He knows that Churches are to be built in every direction, and that those already built want the decent ornaments necessary for the suitable performance of Divine Service. He knows that Sunday and daily schools are to be maintained, and furnished with books—and that parochial lending libraries would be benefited by his contribution. He knows that there is a Church Society, the whole Church in action, comprising Bishop, Clergy, and Laity, ready to receive his aid, and to employ it in the most judicious manner. He knows all this! and he knows that year after year, and at this very moment, he and his fellow-colonists have enjoyed and do enjoy the unparalleled munificence of the two great English Societies, and are indebted to them for the erection of Churches, and the fixed maintenance of a great number of the Clergy. How, knowing this, he can reconcile it to his conscience, to bestow any portion of his means upon Dissent, while he is under obligations, which he can never adequately discharge, to English charity, we are quite at a loss to discover. But he may not know, and it is time he should be told, that the Church in this colony must soon be thrown upon her own resources,—that funds must be raised by ourselves, or there will be no more Clergy for the Bishop to ordain,—that the utmost which we can spare from our scanty means will be sadly insufficient to meet the growing demand for the ministrations of the Church. Only supposing then, that the sum bestowed by the Churchmen of this Diocese upon Dissent, and we think our calculation a very low one, to £500 a-year,—is it not a reproach and an injustice, that a sum, which would support *four missionaries*, should absolutely be given for purposes which have a ten-

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dency to estrange people from our communion, and to increase the difficulties of the Church in her future attempts to collect her scattered children?

And what shall we say of the inconsistency of the Dissenters, in always endeavouring to procure a Churchman to preside over their Anniversary Meeting? Their pertinacity and perseverance under rebuffs and refusals, is, in this respect, astonishing. They first fly at the highest game, and if they cannot get a Judge, a Legislative Councillor, or some eloquent public speaker, they do the best they can, and, after a few failures, generally succeed in getting some respectable Churchman to take the chair for them. But why should they ask a Churchman? They are Dissenters, we presume, because the Church is not sufficiently spiritual for them,—does not sufficiently train up her members in the commandments of God. Yet, on the most public occasion of the year, when the treasury is to be replenished—when the fairest exterior and the most attractive names are to be presented to the public, they do not choose one of their own sect to preside, but enlist the services of some Churchman, whose religion makes him good enough to be their temporary president, but is not good enough for them to live by. And here,—without a particular individual in our eye, and expressly excluding those gentlemen, whose conduct of late has forced us into these remarks,—we take occasion to observe, that the Churchmen, selected to preside at Dissenting Anniversaries are by no means chosen with a reference to their moral or religious character, but merely in consideration of supposed popularity and influence, or their ability to make a speech. How ridiculous would it be, if, at the next general meeting of the Church Society, in June, we were to get a Presbyterian or Methodist layman to take the chair, instead

of the Bishop! And equally ridiculous is it for Dissenters to place a Churchman in the President's seat at their Anniversary meetings,—stationing him there as a decoy-duck, to entrap his brother Churchmen. Really Dissenters, in procuring the presidency of a Churchman at their Anniversary Meetings, must be considered as making either the one or the other of these admissions—that they have not a member of their own fit to take the chair, or that Churchmen, on the score of character and influence, are far more desirable.

We write frequently, and as strenuously as we can, upon this subject, because we deem it one of great practical importance, and involving essential principles. We have not advanced one-half of the arguments which suggest themselves to us, and shall probably be called upon to adduce those that remain to be urged, upon some future occasion. One additional observation, however, we must make before we close.

A Methodist Anniversary Meeting is held in a parish, and the most influential and respectable Churchman presides over it? The clergyman, if he has done his duty, has inculcated unity and undeviating fidelity to the church, and warned his flock against the sin of attending dissenting places of worship. How discouraging then to him, to perceive that his principal parishioner, the man who ought to help and cheer him, and set an example to the rest, has refused obedience to his teachings, and united, albeit for a few hours, with the enemies of the Church. Few circumstances can send a sharper pang into the faithful clergyman's heart, than to see his Parishioners thus neglecting his solemn warnings, and bestowing their countenance and subsistence upon men who revile him and his principles openly, or who stealthily seek to withdraw the sheep from his fold.



## LETTER I.

To the Editor of "The Church."

Toronto, April 12, 1843.

SIR :

In taking the liberty thus publicly to address you on certain topics suggested, or rather forced upon my consideration, by the virulent article which occupies the first column of your paper of the 7th instant, I feel that apology would savour too much of affectation. I deem it equally superfluous to offer any explanation of my motive in availing myself of the courtesy of the present medium of communication, instead of troubling you personally. From one, the Papal arrogance of whose bearing towards members of his own communion when they chance to come in collision with his oracular judgment, and whose bitter and aggressive hostility against all others, constitute his most prominent distinction as a religious journalist, I have no favours to expect, and am therefore thankful that I have none to solicit.

Extravagant, indeed, as are the pretensions put forth in the article referred to, and offensive as its tone must be to those of your own Church, whose christian charity will not admit of being pent up within the little enclosure which affords, it seems, ample scope for all of that quality which you possess yourself, it contains little, I confess, to excite the surprise of any but those who know not what manner of spirit you are of. "The Church" had not long fallen into your hands when its readers became familiarized to such phenomena. Their novelty is gone.

*Tritus, et e medio fortunæ ductus acervo :*

And if the recent effusion of your righteous indignation against inconsistent Churchmen, and incorrigible Dissenters, is more turbid, as well as more copious and violent than previous emanations from the same fountain, the forced and pruden-

tial repression of its overflow for a longer period than usual, probably affords the true solution of the difference.

The proximate cause of this transport of your displeasure, no one can mistake. A gentleman, a member of the Church of England,—the rectitude of whose character we believe, is unimpeachable, whose respect for the institutions and precepts of Christianity, would, perhaps, sustain no very disadvantageous comparison with your own, and who worthily wears the highest civic honours by which this community can express its appreciation of his talents and virtues, stands charged among others by you, with a gross infraction of the unity of the Church, because he had the temerity, on a late occasion, to attend and preside at a Wesleyan Missionary Anniversary.

There can exist no doubt that had that gentleman been as fully convinced of your infallibility and ghostly authority as you would seem to be yourself, he would have felt it imperative upon him to preclude the visitation of your grave condemnation ; for, by no possibility, could he have been ignorant at the time, of your stereotyped decisions on such important points of casuistry.

But the deed is done ! His Worship, the Mayor of the City of Toronto, has had the audacity, your dictation to the contrary notwithstanding, to extend the hand of fraternal recognition and encouragement, to a class of Christians whom God—I speak it not boastfully—has signally owned in their evangelistic labours for more than a century, though *they follow not with you*. And, forsooth, because that gentleman, like many of the most enlightened and estimable members of the Church of England in this Province, has not bowed down and worshipped the image which you have set up—because he does not think proper at

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your bidding, to surrender the common privilege of human nature, the right of private judgment in matters of religion—because he will not put out his conscience to keeping to *you*—because, in a word, he declines recognizing you in your self-constituted character, as director-general of the faith and practice, in every punctilio, of your fellow Christians, he must be “dragged”—as others, alike eminent in rank and religious character, have as unceremoniously been—“before the public, in the columns of a respectable newspaper, for the purpose of censure.”\*

It is high time, Sir, that this system of intimidation, so little complimentary to the principles and understandings of those whom it is intended to awe and control, were checked. It is of the very essence of spiritual despotism. History amply attests that it has been the most effective pioneer and inseparable attendant of the prostration of the civil liberty of professedly christian nations. The highest ecclesiastical authority ought, in our humble judgment, forthwith to interpose, even as a matter of policy, to rescue the provincial branch of the Anglican Church from the stigma and humiliation of having such despicable arts employed to augment her influence. To every discerning mind they indicate *conscious* moral weakness. Christianity repudiates them as unholy, and true wisdom rejects them as impotent and unworthy. They may in some instances coerce an abject submission, and procure in others, a negligent or hypocritical acquiescence; but they can never operate enlightened conviction, and for one whom they attract they will repel a hundred.

Your reasons for practically asserting, in your capacity as the conductor of a religi-

ous journal, a claim of supremacy over the consciences of Churchmen, and for rendering all Dissenters, by the unscrupulous employment of calumny and caricature, as odious as possible, are I doubt not, quite satisfactory to your own mind. But until the exploded maxim, that, *the end sanctifies the means*, is restored to favour and authority, they will never form a satisfactory vindication of such conduct to others. It is in vain to allege that you are impelled by zeal for the unity of the Church,—by a pious solicitude to protect “the seamless garment of the Redeemer” from the violation of unholy hands; you ought to remember that there is a species of zeal, which, while its *sincerity* is above all suspicion, scorches the brain, and causes its subject to mistake the visions of his own fancy for the verities of Inspiration. With the decided preference which you avow for your own denomination I have no fault to find; but the manifestation of that candor and indulgence to others, which you have a right to expect them to exercise towards you, would, permit me to say, be much more ornamental to your character, as a professed disciple of our common Lord, than the spirit of haughty intolerance which your writings breathe. Sympathizing just as little as yourself, with that religious *indifference*, to which I am prepared to admit many of the current professions of courtesy and liberality are to be transferred, I nevertheless cannot divest myself of the impression that your spirit is too much akin to that which, on a certain occasion, prompted the disciples to say, “Master, we saw one casting out devils in thy name, and he followed not with us; and we forbade him because he followeth not with us.” You know the reply. On this monitory incident a sensible commentator has well remarked: “There are men calling themselves Christians, who seem to look with doubt and suspicion on all that is done by

\* See the Hon. Chief Justice Robinson's Letter to the Church, republished in “the Wesleyan” of April 20, 1842, from “the Church.”



those who do not walk with them. They undervalue their labours, attempt to lessen the evidences of their success, and to diminish their influence. True likeness to the Saviour would lead us to rejoice in all the good accomplished, by whomsoever it may be done, and to rejoice that the kingdom of Christ is advanced, whether by a Presbyterian, an Episcopalian, a Baptist, or a Methodist." Sentiments like these, I am sure, your calmer judgment must approve, however ardent may be your desire to see all who

now stand aloof from the Church of England, worshipping within her walls.

It was my intention, when I commenced this letter, to repel the charges of schism, and of the usurpation of ministerial authority, in which you so freely indulge; but the subject is copious, and it is time to come to a close. On these topics, perhaps, I may hereafter address you.

I am, Sir, your humble servant,

MATTHEW RICHEY,

Wesleyan Minister.

## LETTER II.

To the Editor of "The Church."

Toronto, April 18, 1843.

SIR :

When I ventured, in a previous letter, to enter my solemn protest against the course of intolerance and insult—without a parallel, I believe, in the ecclesiastical annals of this Province—which confers upon you so unenviable a species of pre-eminence as the editor of a religious newspaper, I was not prompted by a love of controversy; much less by hostility to the Church of England; least of all by a wish to gratify any feeling of personal resentment. A strong conviction of duty to the cause of truth and of religious liberty was my sole motive. And no impartial judge, it is apprehended, will accuse me of having expressed myself in terms too strongly condemnatory of the spirit displayed in the phillipic by which my remarks were called forth.

But I should do very inadequate justice to my own convictions of duty, and not less so to the important cause of which I have undertaken the defence, were I merely to animadvert upon the unhallowed virulence of your spirit. If you only "verily thought

with yourself" that opposing Methodism and dissent in all their forms, is "doing God service," it would be a matter of comparatively trivial consequence. But when you are so violent and untiring in your efforts to imbue public opinion with the essential acid of your own spirit, and by the fiery exhalations of your intemperate zeal to kindle the whole Episcopal Church in this Province into a flame of bigotry and intolerance, it becomes an office and an obligation of charity itself, boldly to assert the rights of conscience in the face of such persecuting and unblushing arrogance, and to expose the utter fallacy of those principles, or rather absurd pretensions, on which you attempt to base a vindication of your Ishmaelish procedure. You stigmatize us as "Schismatics"—"men whom Scripture bids" you "mark and avoid, as causing divisions and rending the seamless garment of the Redeemer," men, by "consorting in religious fellowship" with whom a Churchman "compromises the plainest principles of Christian unity," while those whom we esteem as messengers of the Church, and the glory of Christ, you unhesitatingly anathematize as "unauthorised ministers whom the Church" (*your Church*

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I presume you mean) "regards as less than laymen, being self-excluded from her pale."

Charges so grave and ominous we are certainly in no danger of considering "the kisses of an enemy," which, Solomon tells us, "are deceitful;" but, before we can view them as referrible to the other branch of the proverbial antithesis, "faithful are the wounds of a friend," we think it not unreasonable to demand evidence of their truth. If positiveness and pertinacity possessed the more than magic virtue of transmuting assertions into arguments, we readily confess few antagonists would be more formidable than yourself; but since that hope is as ridiculous as the alchemist's dream, your reiteration of such assumptions till doomsday would accomplish just nothing towards substantiating them.

Two methods present themselves of briefly dealing with you in regard to the charges which you have so gratuitously and yet so confidently preferred against us:—a direct appeal to the word of God; or an inquiry as to how far you are sustained by your own Church and her most eminent authorities, in the exclusive doctrines you propound with regard to your "Christian brethren"—as with more courtesy than consistency you style them—"belonging to Dissenting denominations." The former of these methods would be more congenial with my own views and feelings; but the latter is, I think, more needful for you. For, if I am not greatly mistaken, such is your predilection for prelacy that you will be more likely to hear THE CHURCH, than to occupy much time in "searching the SCRIPTURES whether these things are so." With a view to your special benefit, I shall therefore frame an *argumentum ad modestiam*, of materials derived from the *Formularies*, *Founders*, and most illustrious theological ornaments of your own venerated Church; which should at least have the effect of preventing you in future from

palming an imposition upon the less informed portion of your readers, by perpetually shielding yourself under the assumed sanction of her authority whenever you wish to infuse special energy into your denunciations against *schismatics* and *unauthorised ministers*.

But let us, in the first place, look at your assumptions in the light of the "holy oracle," and of common sense. Admitting that belief in the divine inspiration of the Scriptures is the basis of Christian communion—a principle the rectitude of which no Protestant will dispute—it necessarily follows that the Bible is the tribunal to which all ecclesiastical claims must be brought for authoritative and final adjudication. Be this our arbiter and judge. From the erring and presumptuous judgment of a weak and vapouring mortal, we appeal "to the law and to the testimony." By *this* be it determined, when we stand charged with the guilt of schism and of an impious invasion of the sacred office, whether it is we who are guilty of crime, or our accusers of calumny. The Catholic *unity* of the Church of our Lord, as it is described and exemplified in the New Testament, consists not in uniformity of practice with regard to *rites and customs*, nor in any particular form of *ecclesiastical government*, for none has been specifically prescribed; but in matters of immeasurably greater moment—in her maintaining the fundamental truths of the Gospel—in her being pervaded and animated in all her faithful members by one Holy Spirit—in their possession of the principle of "like precious faith"—in that "brotherly love" which flows from the love of God shed abroad in the believing heart—and, above all, in vital union with "the Head, from which all the body being nourished and knit together, by the joints and ligaments, increaseth with the increase of God." These, Sir, are the tests of living Christianity: by the uniting power

of these principles it is that, amid all the modifications and changes of ecclesiastical administration, all who truly believe are constituted "ONE in Christ Jesus." The divine cement thus formed is undissolved, untouched by minor differences. "The kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost; and he that IN THESE THINGS serveth Christ is ACCEPTABLE TO GOD," though he may not be *approved of men* entertaining unscriptural sentiments like yours. How gloriously does this view of THE COMMUNION OF SAINTS, contrast with the theory of Christian unity which has such charms for you! a frigid, lifeless, exterior, organization. You may erect a different standard, and, not deigning to "con-sort in religious fellowship" with Methodists or Dissenters, from the haughty distance to which you retire to "avoid them," you may exclaim, "*The temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord, are WE!*" By assuming that the Church of England is the only Church of Christ within the British realms, you may brand as schismatics, and represent as left to uncovenanted mercy, all who are not within her pale; but every "babe in Christ" must perceive that by so doing you incur the fearful responsibility of *condemning* those whom *God hath received*, and who are as "manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ, written, not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God," as any within the pale of your own communion. How preposterous, then, are your exclusive and truly Papal pretensions! It would be well for you to reflect whether the indignant terms in which Dr. Campbell rebuked the temerity of the famous Dodwell, a man after your own heart are not as fully applicable to yourself:—

"Arrogant and vain man! what are you, who so boldly and avowedly presume to foist into God's covenant, articles of your own devising, neither expressed nor implied

in his words? Do you venture, a worm of the earth? Can you think yourself warranted to stint what God hath not stinted, and, following the dictates of your own contracted spirit, enviously to limit the bounty of the Universal Parent, that you may confine to a party what Christ hath freely published for the benefit of all? Is your eye evil because he is good? Shall I then believe that God, like deceitful man, speaketh equivocally, and with mental reservations? Shall I take his declaration in the extent wherein he hath expressly given it; or as you, for your own purpose, have new vamped and corrected it? Let God be true, and every man a liar! You would pervert the plainest declarations of the oracles of truth, and, instead of representing Christ as the author of a divine and spiritual religion, as the great benefactor of human kind, exhibit him as the head of a faction—your party."

Were I addressing one who, by direct avowal, arrogated the claim of infallibility, or who officially represented the anathematizing communion which openly affirms it as an incontrovertible axiom, that *Extra ecclesiam salus non esse potest*, out of her own pale there is no salvation, I should feel less surprise and indignation at the sweeping sentence of proscription which you pronounce indiscriminately upon all separatists and dissenters, and at the zeal with which you labour to convince Churchmen that however irreproachable may be their character or eminent their piety, they are "men whom Scripture bids them mark and avoid." By what principle of the Bible, pray, or of common sense, are you authorised thus to exact the implicit adoption of your dogmas, and unqualified acquiescence in your terms of Christian communion, as a *sine qua non* of our recognition as members of the Church of God? The subject is of too lachrymal a character to admit of ludicrous associations, else one

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might well smile at your visionary conceptions of the nature of the religion of Christ. Dissenters, it might be imagined, *a priori*, are just as likely to be in the right as you. Their means of spiritual illumination are as ample; and, having equally valuable interests to secure, their motives to a faithful use of them are as solemn and impulsive. Thousands of them, of various denominations, are inferior to none in the Church of England, in intelligence, and in the Scripture marks of a child of God. Have *you* searched the Scriptures with deep devotion of heart? They have done the same. Have *you* felt yourself to be a sinner, and fled to a pardoning God through the only Mediator? So have they. Have *you* found peace with God, and received the spirit of Christ, without which a man can be none of his? These covenant blessings have been consciously communicated to them. Do *you* adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things? So do they. Are they, then, to be ordered to *stand off*, merely because, after much deliberation, they have adopted different views of Church *polity* from you, and, under a full conviction of the rectitude of those views, will not passively yield to all your imperious exactions, i. e., falter in their allegiance to Christ! Would it not be infinitely more rational as well as christian-like for you to soliloquise and act in reference to such an one and to *all* such, as the Hon. and Rev. Baptist Noel does. "Am I now," says that distinguished ornament of the English Establishment, speaking of a conscientious dissenting brother—"Am I now to separate from his society? How has he sinned? He was obliged to follow what seemed to him the will of Christ. His conclusions were supported by several of the Protestant Churches. The Lutheran, Swiss, French, Dutch, and Scotch Churches, the Church of Vaudois, and a large and pious section of the American Church, were all

on his side. While in favour of episcopacy, beside the Church of Rome, 'the mother of harlots and abominations of the earth, drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus;' and the eastern churches, which are nearly as corrupt, he found only the Church of England, and three or four sections of the Church of Christ elsewhere, who had retained diocesan episcopacy. Under these circumstances, am I to separate from him? Not to have examined the scripture doctrine would have been sin. Not to have followed the conviction of duty to which the examinations led him would have been sin. In fidelity to Christ he was obliged to act as he did; and if I separate from him, I do it only because he did his duty."\* Oh! how refreshing, Sir, to turn from the chilling and repulsive mutterings of your morbid and bigoted spirit to these elevated sentiments of true christian charity—sentiments which delight us the more, because they emanate from one of the noblest sons of the Anglican Church. Had you inhaled ever so small a portion of the spirit they breathe, could you, I solemnly ask, by a process so summary, and apparently without a misgiving or a sigh, eject from the pale of scriptural Christianity two-thirds of all the Protestant ministers in Christendom, with the millions of immortal souls under their pastoral care!!

Apart from this revolting view of the principles you propound, in reference to christian *unity*, the charge of schism comes with a very bad grace from the member of a church which is in this respect herself not without sin, and therefore has no right to cast the first stone. I do not now refer to her *coming out* from the Church of Rome. In this I glory; and I devoutly pray God she may never *go in* again. Here, however, I must be permitted to remark, that

\* See the Hon. and Rev. B. Noel's Tract on the Unity of the Church.

the Church of Rome has, on *your* principles, a much more specious pretext for hurling the charge of schism against *you*, than you can exhibit for preferring it against *us*. And well she understands how to use it. Steady to her purpose, she meets all the advances of high churchmen, all their attempts to conciliate her fraternization, with a stern and inflexible refusal "to compromise the plainest principles of christian unity." She tells you pointblank,—“Gentlemen, this, really, is quite condescending! Feeling some little qualms, it would appear, as to the validity of your title, to the appellation Apostolic Catholic Church, you prefer being admitted as tenants in common with us, to denying that *we* have any right, by asserting that the whole estate rests in yourselves. We cannot but feel grateful for your generosity. BUT WE WILL NONE OF IT. If we can have no better claim than this to the name, we are done with it.” A mortifying predicament this to be placed in truly! But it is nothing more than the *legitimate* reaction of high church principles and pretensions on their infatuated advocates. To return from this digression, and leaving the church of Rome out of sight, it is with a singular want of modesty, that you attempt to cover *us* with the odium of schism. O Sir, look *at home*! Schismatics! What Protestant Church so much infested with them as your own? Instead of inquiring what descriptions of those mischievous gentry you *have*? I might rather ask, what sort of them, however heretical, *have you not*? Universalists, Swedenborgians, Pelagians, Socinians \* \* \* the catalogue is far from being filled up, but let this sample suffice. Schism! what intelligent child does not know, Sir, that the great schism of the day, of the *age*, that which is rending to shreds “the seamless garment of the Redeemer,” is at this hour *making havock* of your own church—a schism by which it will be well if she

is not ruptured and riven from the centre to the circumference, or worse yet, carried away captive to Babylon. May He who dwelt in the bush, preserve her in the fiery furnace, and bring her forth in renovated purity and power! But, my dear Sir, in the name of modesty, say little about schisms *abroad* while things are in so deplorable a state *at home*.

If we really are as you represent, without an authorised ministry, and therefore without any sacraments, in a state of abandonment to *uncovenanted* mercy, that is, as the phrase, I suppose, means, to “judgment *without* mercy,” then we are fit objects of the deepest compassion, and every effort that wisdom can devise or charity suggest, ought to be employed by those who alone are *authorised* to interpose for our rescue, to “recover us out of the snare of the devil.” But allow me to express an opinion not hastily formed, that the method you adopt to accomplish this object, is not “the *more excellent* way.” He who perfectly knows our moral constitution, has said, “The cords of *love* are the bands of a man.” And we fully believe it. But N. B. these are not the kind of cords *you* make use of. Your mode of proceeding is much more calculated to plant or exasperate prejudice against the church of England, in the minds of Wesleyan Methodists and Dissenters, than to extirpate any that may exist. You make invidious comparisons, insult us by offensive epithets, warn churchmen against us as moral lepers whom they are to “mark and avoid”—in a word, you clothe us in the livery of shame and reproach, and then hooting at us, exclaim, Behold the schismatics! Mark those men! Avoid them! Have no fellowship with them! Now, does it never occur to you Sir, that this is precisely the way in which the persecutors of the primitive followers of our Lord proceeded towards them? With amazing fertility of malignant invention they coined epithets of

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reproach for them, to make them hated as a most dangerous and contemptible set of men. Ever the courtly Suetonius, you know, called them, *Genus hominum superstitionis novæ et malificæ*, "a class of men addicted to a new and mischievous superstition." You cannot either greatly elevate yourself or injure us by imitating such unworthy examples. Besides, by showing a disposition to take away our good name, you lay us under a painful temptation to suspect, that were it in your power, you would, in tender mercy to our souls, trample both our civil and religious liberties in the dust, if necessary, in order that you might *compel us to come in* to the Holy Apostolic Catholic Church. Dr. Jortin somewhere observes, that, "Christ never used anything that looked like force or violence, but once; and that was to *drive* bad men out of the temple, but not to drive them *into* it." And you would do well to digest the remark.

But it is quite time to inquire how far you are supported in your narrow views, and excommunicating censures of non-episcopalians, by the recognized standards of the doctrines of the Church of England, and by her most illustrious theological ornaments and authorities. I fearlessly assert, and I challenge the production of proof to the contrary, that

*There is not an iota in the public FORMULARIES of the Anglican Church, to authorise the ejection of Presbyterian Churches from the pale of Christian communion.*

Her most distinct announcement, on this subject, is found in the Twenty-third Article; and whether that places non-episcopal churches under the ban of excommunication, let Bishop Burnet—and no authority is entitled to more profound deference on the subject—say.

"The definition here given, of those that are lawfully called and sent, is put in very general words, far from that magisterial

stiffness, in which, some, (the Non-jurors &c.,) have taken upon them to dictate in this matter. The article does not resolve this into any particular constitution, but leaves the matter open, and at large for such accidents as had happened, and such as might still happen. Those who drew it had the state of the *several churches* before their eyes that had been *differently reformed*; and although their own had been less forced out of the beaten path than others, yet they knew that all things among themselves had not gone according to those rules that ought to be sacred in regular times; necessity has no law, and is a law unto itself." \* \* \* \* "Whatever some hotter spirits have thought of this since that time, yet we are very sure, that, *not only those who penned the articles, but the body of the church for above half an age after, did, notwithstanding, those irregularities, acknowledge the foreign churches so constituted, to be true churches, as to all the essentials of a church*, though they had been at first irregularly formed, and continued still to be in an imperfect state. And therefore, the general words in which this part of the article is framed, seem to have been *designed on purpose* not to exclude them." Bishop Tomline's exposition of this article exhibits views equally just and liberal with reference to churches under different systems of ecclesiastical polity; but the passage is too long for quotation. (See his Elements of Christian Theology.)

And then, tell me, what is the meaning of the fifty-fifth canon—"Ye shall pray for Christ's holy catholic church; *that is*, for the *whole congregation of christian people dispersed throughout the world*, and especially for the churches of England, Scotland, and Ireland, &c.," if it does *not* fully recognize the membership of other churches? Moreover, it is an undeniable *historical fact*, that up to the year 1662, the office for the ordination of Presbyters in the Church of



England, peculiarly appropriated to *them* the terms of the Apostolic commission, and the promise of the Savior's perpetual presence—and further enjoins, that “they with the bishop *shall lay their hands severally*, upon the head of *every one* that receiveth the order of the priesthood.” The inference is too obvious to need any formal statement.

Pass we to the Reformers: It is matter of general notoriety, that almost to a man, not only did they admit, but maintain, that in point of order, the New Testament makes no difference betwixt bishops and presbyters; and that the opposite doctrine involves an antichristian usurpation. Take one proof of this, so conclusive, that a folio volume filled with similar testimonies, would not more fully settle the point: In a book, entitled “The Instruction of a Christian man,” which the Archbishops, Bishops, and Clergy subscribed with their own hands, and dedicated to the king in the year 1537, it is explicitly declared in the chapter on orders, “That priests and bishops, *by God's law* are one and the same; and that the power of ordination, and excommunication, belongs *equally* to them both.” \*

\* There are two facts to which it was my intention to advert in my letter, but, in the unavoidable hurry of composition they were overlooked. They are so extremely pertinent, that I here append them. “No Bishop in Scotland during my stay in that kingdom,” says Bishop Burnet. “ever did so much as *desire* any of the *Presbyterians* to be re-ordained.” (See his Vindication, printed, London, 1696.) The other fact is that Grindal, Archbishop of Canterbury, issued a licence to Mr John Morrison, a Scotch minister, bearing date, 6th of April, 1582, in the following terms:—“Since you the foresaid John Morrison, about five years past, in the town of Garret, in the county of Lothian, in the kingdom of Scotland, were admitted and ordained to sacred orders and the holy ministry, by the imposition of hands according to the laudable form and rite of the reformed church of Scotland; and since the congregation of that county of Lothian is conformable to the orthodox faith and sincere religion, now received in this realm of England, established by public authority; We therefore, as much as lies in us, and, as by right we may, approving and ratifying the form of your ordination and preferment done in such manner aforesaid, grant you a licence and faculty, with the consent and express command of the most reverend father in Christ, the Lord Edmund, by divine providence, archbishop of Canterbury, to be signified, that in such orders by you taken, you may, and have power in any convenient places in and throughout the whole province of Canterbury, to celebrate divine offices, to minister the sacraments,” etc. (Neal's History of the Puritans, vol. i., chap. vi.)

Permit me, though I have already trespasses so much on your time, to introduce you, before I close, to three or four dignitaries, who, being dead, yet speak,—and with whom you would find your account in cultivating an acquaintance, instead of confining yourself so exclusively to the society of Bishop Beveridge and a few others of the same school.—No reference shall be made either to Bishop Hoadly, or to Archbishop Whately, for I know well, that even their mitres would secure for them no more respect at your hands than you accord to unauthorised ministers. No such insuperable objections, I trust, exist in your mind to the renowned WORTHIES who are now about to address you.

Hear what Bishop Andrews says, “Though episcopal Government be of divine institution, yet it is *not* so absolutely necessary as that there can be no Church nor Sacraments, nor Salvation, without it. He is blind, that sees not *many churches* flourishing *without it*; and he must have a heart as hard as iron, that will deny them salvation.” \*

Mark what Bishop Sherlock says, in his examination of Belarmine's Notes of the Church; “I am sure that it is not a safe communion where there is not a succession of *Apostolic doctrine*; but whether the want of a succession of Bishops, will, in all cases unchurch, will admit of a greater dispute. I am sure a true faith in Christ, with a true gospel conversation, will save men; and some learned Romanists defend that old definition of the Church, that it is *cætus fidelium*, the company of the faithful, and will not admit Bishops or Pastors into the definition of a church.” †

Listen to the venerable Archbishop Usher: “I think that Churches that have no Bishops, are defective in their government; yet, for justifying my communion

\* Bristed's Thoughts, p. 440.

† Notes of the Church examined and refuted, p. 55.

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with them, which I do love and honour—as true members of the Church universal, I do profess, if I were in Holland, I should receive the blessed Sacrament at the hands of the Dutch, with the like affection as I should from the hands of the French ministers, were I at Charenton.” \*

“Far from me,” exclaims Archbishop Wake, alluding to all the reformed Churches, not episcopal (and his noble-minded utterance on the subject, shall close this illustrious *succession* of witnesses against your dogmatism,) “Far from me, be the *iron heart*, that, for this defect (let me so call it without offence), I should think any one of them to be cut off from our communion; or with certain *raving writers* among us, think them to possess no valid sacraments, and to pronounce them hardly christian. I would, at any price, obtain a closer union among all the reformed.” †

I can easily imagine the perplexity into which you will be thrown by such an array of authorities, which it would seem supremely indecorous, not to say *schismatical*, in you to impugn. And yet I may truly affirm, as you do in regard to your arguments against churchmen consorting with dissenters; I “have not advanced one-half, and shall probably be called upon to adduce those that remain to be urged, upon some future occasion.” In such an extremity your only resource is the dogma of “Apostolical Succession;” and that is really a forlorn hope. The links that compose this celebrated chain, I have not the slightest objection to examine whenever they are pre-

\* Letter to Dr. Bernard.

† “*Interim absit ut ego tam ferrei pectoris sim, ut ob ejusmodi defectum (sic mihi absque omni invidia appellare liceat) aliquas earum a communione nostra abscindendas credam; aut, cum quibusdam furiosis inter nos scriptoribus, eas nulla vera ac valida sacramenta habere, adeoque vix Christianos esse, pronuntiem. Unionem arctiorem inter omnes reformatos procurare quovis pretio vellem.*” Letter to M. Le-Clerc.

sented; but, if you do not envy the felicity of “a mouse in pitch,” *mus in pice*, I advise you not to tease yourself in this Popish labyrinth. The learned Stillingfleet, when he was a dean, not only pronounced but *proved* this succession to be “as muddy as the Tyber;” and his herculean endeavours to purify the stream after he became a bishop, were signally unsuccessful. The Homily for Whitsunday (have you ever read it, Sir?) ought for ever to settle this question with all Churchmen who do not deplore the Reformation as a calamity and a crime. It plucks up that figment of superstition by the roots, and scatters it to the wind.

One word respecting the future conduct of your paper, and I have done. It would of course be the height of arrogance in me, an unauthorised minister—a schismatic, less than a layman, because self-excluded from the pale of a church to which *I never belonged*, to preach to *you*. I therefore enlist the service of one of the first biblical scholars of the age, a clergyman of your own church, and therefore *duly* authorised, the Rev. Thomas Hartwell Horne, B. D.

In his discourse on “The Conformity of the Church of England to Apostolic Precept and Pattern,” he thus exhorts: “While in the exercise of your inalienable right of private judgment, you deliberately prefer her communion, show to all who profess conscientiously to differ from you, the more excellent way of active christian charity, by imputing to them no sinister motives for their dissent; by *uniting with them* in every act of holy and christian benevolence, in which you can cordially co-operate; and by praying for their spiritual welfare, that they all may hold the faith in unity of spirit, in the bond of peace and righteousness of life.”

When the organ of that branch of the Church of Christ in this province, which is connected with the venerable Establishment of England, shall become the vehicle

and advocate of sound and salutary principles like these—when, purified from the sectarian rancour with which it is now so thoroughly saturated, it shall breathe “peace and good will towards men”—when, instead of habitually violating the paramount law of christian charity, and, in the recklessness of its zeal, totally disregarding even the precepts of conventional decency, by its contumelious and abusive treatment of other christian bodies, it shall throw away its “carnal weapons,” and take unto it “the armour of God”—when, in a word, instead of fomenting the mutual repugnancies that unhappily exist between the different portions of the Saviour’s fold, by scattering among them, in sportive malignity, “firebrands arrows and death,” it

shall employ its influence to pour into the wounds that have been ulcerating for ages, a healing unguent—then, and *not till then*, will it make good its “Apostolic boast,” and worthily represent, in doctrine and spirit, the ever-to-be-honoured instruments of the Glorious Reformation from Popery.

Hoping *against* hope, that a consummation so devoutly to be desired by every spiritually-minded Churchman, may be speedily realized, either by a change of its Editor, or (which would delight us immeasurably more) a thorough and blessed change in the Editor.

I am, Sir, your humble servant,

MATTHEW RICHEY,

*Wesleyan Minister.*

## POSTSCRIPT.

While these sheets are passing through the press, a reply by the Editor of the *Church* to the preceding Letters appears in the *Herald*. Any observations in the way of a rejoinder, must therefore be despatched with all possible brevity.

1. The most prominent part of the reply is a long extract from *Three Sermons on the Church* recently published by the Bishop of London, in which his Lordship is graciously pleased to “express a persuasion, or at least a *hope*, that those *national churches* which having once, *unavoidably and unwillingly*, lost the perfectness of ecclesiastical order, have not yet regained it, *possibly not having been able to do so*, are yet within the pale of Christ’s Church, so far at least as the being so is necessary to the salvation of their individual members.” To his *ex cathedra* mode of settling, or rather unsettling, the terms of a sinner’s acceptance with God, we can only say,—The Lord have mercy upon those whose hope of salvation rests upon no bet-

ter foundation than the courteous concession, or hypothesis, of *any man*, be he Bishop or Archbishop, Cardinal or Pope! We have not so learned Christ. Our faith standeth not in the *wisdom of men*, but in THE POWER OF GOD. When with a broken and a contrite heart, I tremblingly ask the *Apostles themselves*, “*What must I do to be saved?*” Their response, their *only* response is, “BELIEVE ON THE LORD JESUS CHRIST, AND THOU SHALT BE SAVED.” Now, if any man come to me in *their* name, and *bring not this doctrine*, am I, in the face of the most solemn and explicit declarations of my Bible, to give credence to his *heresy*? “Though we,” says Paul, “or an angel from heaven preach unto you any other gospel than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed.”

2. But to even this *hypothetical* hope of salvation, the poor *Wesleyans*, it seems, can have no claim. The bishop’s theory is so constructed as to present an aspect of mercy to *national churches* only, and that under

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peculiar circumstances. The sufficiently intelligible inference of the Editor of the *Church* is, that "the schism commenced by Mr. Wesley and continued by his followers," admits of no other prospect than a fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation.--We utterly repudiate alike the conclusion, and the premises. Separation from a particular section of the professedly Christian church—and the Church of England is *only a section* of it—is not, under all circumstances, *schism*. She separated from the Church of Rome; is she therefore a *schismatical* body? The separation of the Wesleyan Methodism from the Anglican Church was *not voluntary*, but *compulsory*. There was one condition only on which, so far as Methodism is concerned, it could have been prevented, namely, by obeying men rather than God. In its entire structure, spirit, and course, Methodism is the very converse of what the word of God condemns as schism. Into the ecclesiastical position which it now occupies, *it was compelled*; by the unkind and repellent treatment of others. Approving of the maxim of Burke,—that the wounds of a parent ought to be approached with trembling solicitude—we have no inclination to enter into the dark details which more than establish this point, unless they should be imperiously called for. Late events, however, afford ground to believe, that this separation has been permitted by the wisdom of Divine Providence, for the accomplishment of most important objects. But for the spiritually-conservative influence of Methodism during years long gone by, and that which she now exercises upon both Church and State, what, ere this, would have been the condition of the boasted bulwark of the Reformation? Not unlikely, more corrupt if possible than when Wesley commenced his Apostolic labours, if not under the withering ascendancy of the Great Apostacy, doing penance

for having ever presumed to question the universal supremacy of St. Peter's Successor.

3. Our opponent, in his reply, endeavours to neutralize the force of the argument in favor of the validity of Presbyterian ordination, derived from the book, entitled "*The Institution of a Christian Man*," signed by the Archbishops, Bishops, and Clergy, by alleging, that the same book contains many of the heretical doctrines of the Romish Church.—We confess ourselves at a loss to imagine how this allegation even *were it established*, can be justly regarded as deducting from the weight of our argument. The fact, that the Reformers, at a time when their knowledge was so imperfect, that they only "saw men as trees walking," had light enough to discover from the new Testament that bishops and presbyters, as to order, are identical, only strengthens our position. But we are not confined to *one* or *two* historical facts. In addition to those stated in a note, page 14, many more, supported by unexceptionable evidence might easily be adduced. Is it not an historical truth, that in the reigns of Edward VI. and Queen Elizabeth, many ministers were employed in the Anglican Establishment, who had received only presbyterian ordination, among whom were Travers, lecturer to the Temple; Whittingham, dean of Durham; the celebrated Wright of Cambridge, and Knox, the Scotch reformer? Nay, did not Martyr, and Bucer, Ochinus and Fagius, foreign reformers, come over to England at the invitation of Edward; and without *re-ordination* occupy most honourable and influential positions in the English Church? The assumption of the superiority of bishops, *jure divino*, to presbyters, was, in truth, one of the first steps that marked the *retrogression* of a large portion of the English establishment *from* the principles and spirit of the Reformation. The London Christian Observer



justly remarks : " Towards the close of the reign of Elizabeth, and in the beginning of that of James I., there sprang up a new school, widely differing from that of the reformers, and the tenets of which at length acquired the coherence of a system ; and under the influence of Archbishop Laud, in the reign of Charles II., became widely prevalent. At the restoration they were resuscitated by the surviving divines of Laud's school ; and they were, for the most part, embraced by the non-jurors." (See the No. for Feb., 1841.)

4. All this serves to show the fallacy of our opponent's mode of reply to us, when from *principles* and *formularies* he appeals to the *practice* of his church. Before this arguing can prove any thing, the perfect and uniform *coincidence* of these, must first be established. Canons, moreover, which regulate ecclesiastical administration *within* a church are one thing ; and *anathematizing* differing communions, is quite another thing. The bold assertion of our opponent, that the " public formularies of the Anglican Church, pronounce excommunication upon every one within the realm dissenting from the Church of England," turns out, then, to be only another proof of his possessing, in no ordinary degree those qualities for which we have already given him full credit, viz., perverseness and pertinacity. Where is the consistency of the English Church's denunciation of the ordination of the Popes as conveying "*the spirit of the devil*, and not of God," and of the Popes themselves as "*Lucifer's successors*," entitled to no better reputation " among the servants of Christ " than " the forerunner of Antichrist,"—contained in the Homily for Whitsunday ; while, in *practice*, she recognizes the validity of the ordination of Popish Priests ? Aiming at the special benefit of *The Church*, we have thus met him again on *his own* ground, and shown that it is no better than yielding sand.

5. For the purpose of outnumbering the churches that practice presbyterial ordination, our foiled adversary rather imprudently betrays his latent tendencies, by calling in to his aid " the corrupt Roman and Eastern Churches." His apology for this is " the infidelity of the so-called Protestant Germany and Geneva." But has he lost sight of the fact that there are a goodly number of Socinians and neologists in the Anglican Church ? and that orthodoxy in the recognized articles and exponents of faith, forms but a feeble barrier against error of the most deadly kind, when those who subscribe them cease to be animated with "*the love of the truth*." Here, however, Methodism stands upon vantage ground so high, as to repel alike assault and *insinuation*. No one, we presume, ever heard of so anomalous a personage as a Wesleyan Socinian.

After all our pains, it is not unlikely that our opponent will maintain, as it is natural for him to wish others to believe, " that his arguments have been left nearly untouched." And, understanding the term *arguments* in its conventional meaning, we have not much to object to this statement. We never professed to be quite ethereal enough to touch what is really intangible. But wherever we have found in his declamations, any thing that *looked like* an argument, we have certainly endeavoured to do something *more* than merely touch it ; and whatever opinion either *he* or *I* may entertain of the result will not much influence the decision of a discerning public. For them it now remains to determine, whether the weapons we have employed in this controversy, by us unsought, resemble more the pointless darts of old Priam ;—to which our antagonist likens them—or the winged shaft of Priam's son, which proved fatal to Achilles. The defence of the *truth*, however, not the achievement of a *victory*, has been our object.



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